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John Carter Brown.

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7th Feb 1874, No 6.

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POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL
SPECULATIONS
ON THE
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE
PRESENT CENTURY;

AND

On the STATE of LEGISLATION, MILITARY
ESTABLISHMENTS, FINANCES, and COM.
MERCE, in EUROPE:

WITH

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS

On the PROBABLE EFFECTS of

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCY.

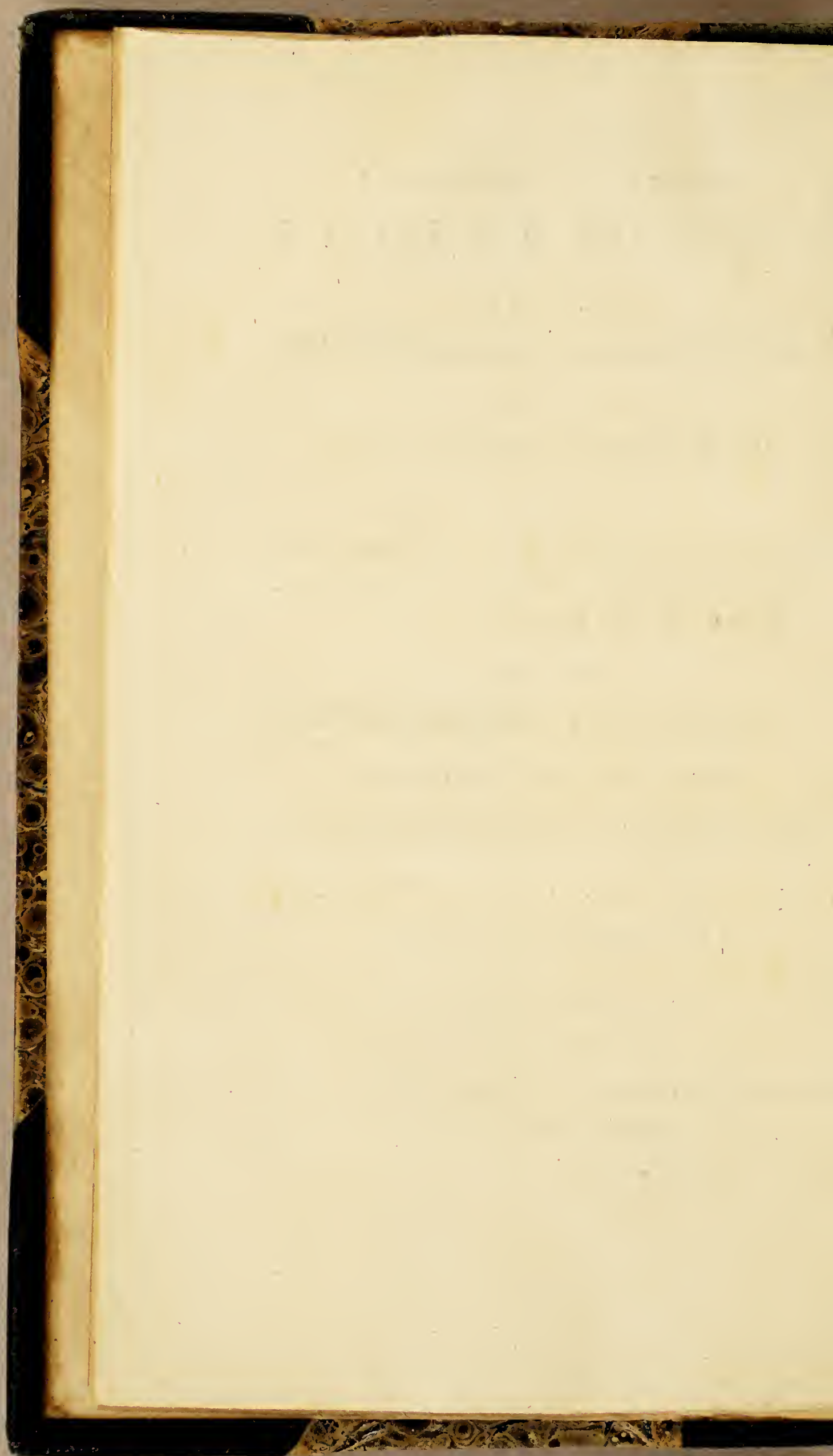
By Mr. L I N G U E T,

Late of the Parliament of PARIS.

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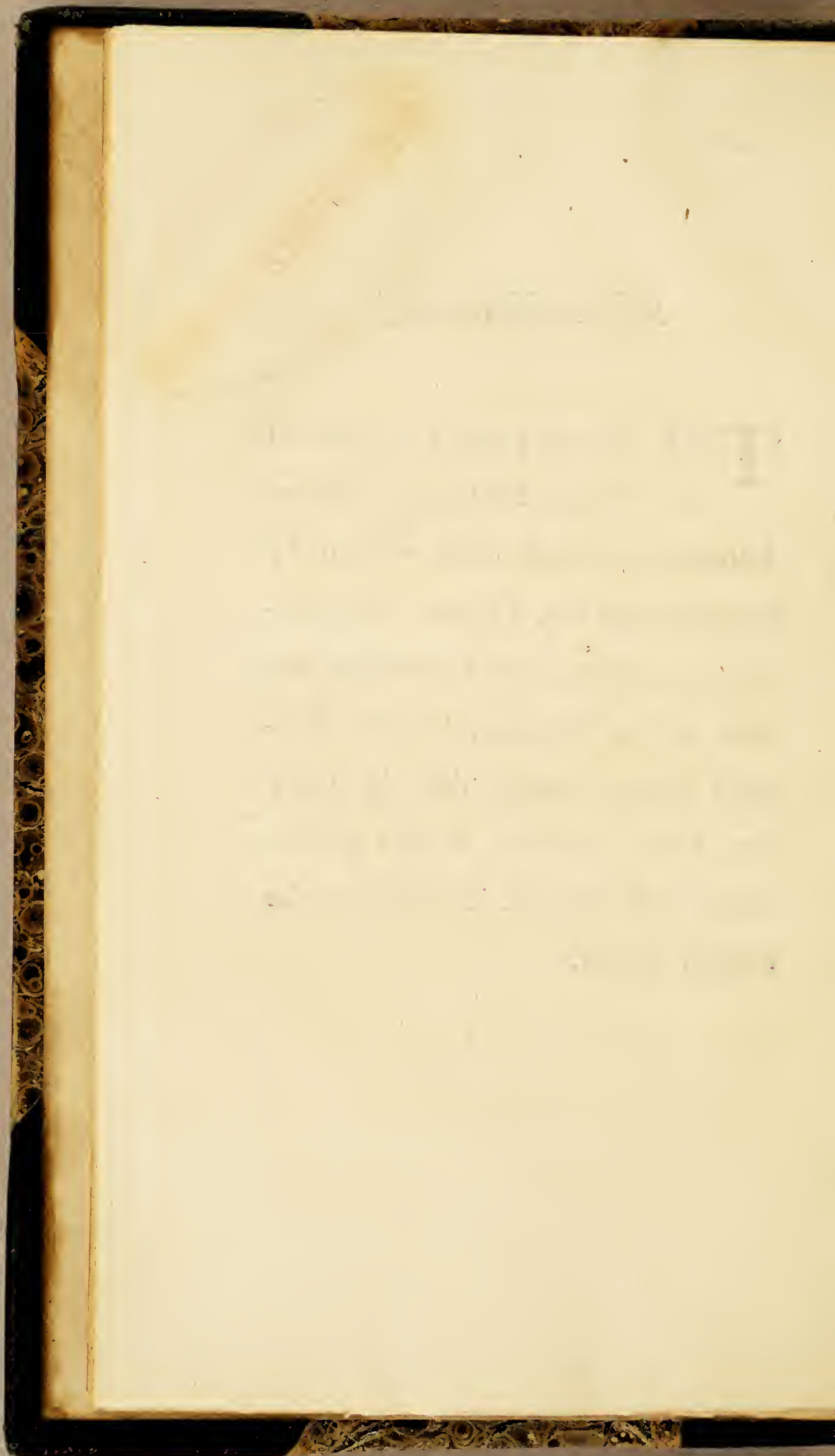
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Advertisement.

THE following Work is a part of the *Annales Politiques, Civiles et Literaires du 18ieme Siecle*, written by the celebrated Mr. Linguet. It is difficult to preserve, in a Translation, the spirit of the Original; but the Publisher flatters himself, that the many new ideas contained in this performance, will render it interesting to the English Reader.



POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL
SPECULATIONS, &c.

THE present century has already given birth to a variety of unforeseen and singular events of every kind. The minority of Lewis the XVth. devoted to a series of ruinous Speculations which were so much felt throughout the remainder of his reign; the creation of Russia, if we may be

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allowed the expression, by a legislator
 who may himself be said to have arisen
 self created, and the revolutions which
 in later years have at different times
 shaken its throne without impeding its
 progress to improvement; the sudden
 elevation of Prussia, and the success
 with which an Elector of Brandenburg
 has supported a shock which was so
 fatal to Lewis the XIVth; the forma-
 tion of a new Imperial house, amidst
 a series of wars undertaken with a
 view to destroy it; the reconciliation
 of the two houses of Bourbon and
 Austria; the suppression of the Jesuits,
 which

which in whatever light we view it, seems to merit a place amongst the remarkable events of the present century; the humiliation of Poland, and the partition of ten of its provinces, undertaken with the greatest tranquillity by three neighbouring powers, and viewed seemingly with an eye of indifference by the rest of Europe; lastly, the revolt of the Americans, and their pretensions to independency: all these will be so many objects calculated to excite the wonder of posterity. But before we attempt to speculate on the effects which these events

may be expected to produce, let us inquire into the state of the world at the very moment in which we are writing.

Beginning with *Europe*, we see *France* in a state of humiliation from a series of external losses and disasters; and tormented within by that kind of fatigue which is inseparable from great exertions; preserving its weight in the balance of Europe, rather from the consideration arising from its extensive domains, than from its having any claims to the title of a great power;
loaded

loaded with an immense national debt, which is every day accumulating, and becoming more and more an obstacle to the resources which an able minister might hope to meet with in that kingdom; the chief of these resources are, perhaps, to be sought for in the youth and tractable disposition of the Sovereign ;

England, no sooner arisen to the meridian of glory and power, than it begins to experience the ills that result from them; overwhelmed, as it were, by its greatness and conquests; exposed

to all the horrors of a civil war, under a prince who is universally admired for the natural lenity of his temper; and to the ravages of luxury, notwithstanding the pattern of simplicity which this same prince exhibits to his subjects; necessitated, whatever may be the success of the American war, to see from the present hour in her children only so many inexorable enemies or redoubtable slaves; paying, by the most enormous taxes for the honour of holding the first rank in Europe, and by the loss of its morals, for that of being the repository of almost

almost all the gold of the globe; enjoying however, notwithstanding the inconceivable riches of individuals, only of an imaginary national wealth; a wealth, which may in one moment be destroyed, and leave to its possessors only the melancholy feelings of regret, corruption, civil animosities and despotism;

Italy, reduced to nothing, or at least to the enjoyment of a delicious climate and the reliques of its ancient magnificence, under a government which owes its present weakness to the lenity it has so long adopted;

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Spain,

Spain, affording only a great name and the shadow of its former power; a shadow which is still spread over a greater portion of the globe than was ever under the dominion of the Cæsars, but which will soon give way to the influence of liberty if the Americans should preserve it;

Germany, on the eve of a revolution which for more than three centuries has taken place around it, and labouring to accelerate the moment in which its present foedal state will
give

give way to an absolute monarchy, under which its princes will be considered only as *peers* of the Imperial court, or as its *chaplains*;

Sweden, just delivered from an aristocracy, which, like all aristocratic governments was humiliating and despotic; and seeking for protection in the absolute authority of one man against the inconveniences of limited and divided power, it being better at any rate to be under one tyrant than many;

Poland,

Poland, imbibing from its wounds a principle of activity, which will perhaps bring with it more real strength than it ever derived from its state of seeming security; and waiting only for an hereditary sovereign to astonish, perhaps to terrify its neighbours, and to avenge itself one day or other, at their expence, for the humiliation into which it seems just now to be fallen;

Prussia and *Russia*, rising states, exhibiting, like Hercules from the cradle, a degree of strength, which is seldom to be met with in infancy, and having
to

to fear only from the premature vigor they seem to announce, and which cannot fail to excite the jealousy and envy of their neighbours. The latter of these, *Russia*, affords us a very extraordinary view of four successive female sovereigns, all of them glorious, and more especially the reigning Empress. A proof this, that the Salic laws are as absurd as they are unjust. The talents for administration may be common to both sexes; and councils and support being essentially necessary to so elevated a station, a female sovereign will naturally seek for them in
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the opposite sex. Every throne therefore from which women are excluded, will be influenced by their intrigues, whereas those to which they have a right of succession will be supported by men: but with this essential difference, that the favorite to whom the male crown chances to be subjected, having arisen to this ascendancy through the channel of vice and intrigue, and being tempted by the uncertainty of her situation to be rapid in her acquisitions, never fails to disgrace the reign in which she governs: whereas, a woman who is consecrated by the royal unction,

tion, is directed by nobler views; conscious of the legitimacy of her elevation she derives from it a dignity of sentiment; and her own personal interest attaches her to the interest of her subjects. She enjoys more feelingly, and perhaps better, than a man would do, the glory she derives to herself and the nation, because less was expected from her. In short, the taste of her sex for great things, and the idea of its weakness, render her so much the more studious to distinguish and countenance merit.

If

If from *Europe* we pass on to *Asia*, we shall find the Turks cherishing the desire of revenge, and this revenge they will, perhaps, one day or other be enabled to satiate if some experienced minister should be called in, capable of giving stability to a machine of such immensity as the Ottoman empire.

Persia, during the last fifty years has been devoted to a series of convulsions, altogether similar to those which disgraced the latter ages of the Roman empire;

empire; but we now see it resuming under a second *Thamas*, a degree of strength, which the Lords of the two *Romes* were never able to recover after they had once lost it.

We shall find *Indostan*, and all the vast peninsula of the Indies, in a state of devastation not so much from war as from piracy. It is a melancholy truth, that the Europeans who usurp not only the commerce but the territory of the East, have acquired them by rapine and cruelty, and by all the iniquitous acts that avarice and ambition

tion can inspire. It is impossible to read the history of their transactions without shuddering.

We shall find that *Asia* in general, which in earlier days was the seat of the arts, and the source of the luxury and magnificence and corruption of the masters of the world, is in these times submitted to a yoke, which, tho' less brilliant, is less burthensome than its former one; we see it indeed laid waste by intestine troubles, but these are transitory; the mildness of its govern-

government *, the fertility of its soil, and the wants of strangers are so many means by which it may recover its former splendor.

With respect to *Africa*, it seems to be no longer considered in the political system of the world, although some part of its shores are still reeking with Christian blood, and resounding the shouts of victory. Inhabited by a race of barbarians, all the purposes it serves may be included in its

* See *La Theorie des Loix*, published by Mr. Linguet.

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supply-

supplying pernicious treasures to Europe, and slaves for American cultivation.

The philosopher cannot fail to observe, that this centre of the globe is at once inhabited by the vilest of men and the most ferocious of animals ; as if Nature had aimed at fortifying its inhabitants against the inclination she has given them to slavery, by placing them under the same sky with the lion ; or, perhaps, under this emblem, she meant to delineate the despotism to which

which these unhappy countries were to be devoted *.

In short, let us proceed to the Western Hemisphere and observe *America*. We shall find it submitted throughout the whole of its extent to principles which are no less extraordinary than its productions; we see it distinguished, as it were, into two portions, each of which affords a very different aspect; one of these is groaning under all the

* I am far from confounding the African governments with those of Asia. My opinion on this subject will be seen, at large, in my *Theorie des Loix*.

ills which accompany superstition and opulence; whilst the other, guided by the lights of philosophy, is led on to civil war, and is claiming an independency, which will, perhaps, be no less fatal to herself than to the rest of Europe.

The fate of the American colonies being now submitted to the decision of arms, it would be to no purpose to investigate the justice of their claims to independency. But I could wish to inquire of politicians in either Hemisphere, whether they have seriously reflected on all the effects which such an independency may be expected to produce.

In

In the first place, will not the success of the Americans be an endless source of divisions amongst themselves? From what we know of the human mind, ambition and a love of power will soon begin to actuate the operations of the congress and provincial assemblies. In all Aristocratic governments there is more of the parade, but perhaps less of the reality of patriotism than under an absolute Monarch. The example of seven little provinces near the *Zuiderzee*, which have preserved unity after success, and

freedom notwithstanding their wealth, is by no means applicable to the vast and almost boundless extent of the American colonies. Holland, deriving not only the luxuries but even the necessaries of life from other countries, would seem to be restrained from corruption by the frugal hand of Nature herself; but this is not the case with America: nor have the Americans the same motives to a revolt that formerly influenced the Dutch, who were groaning under the most oppressive tyranny. Nor will they, like the Dutch, be able to maintain one common

mon interest and an unity of plans and operations; but will find a thousand objects for rivalry arising the moment their independency becomes acknowledged, and their commerce free and uninterrupted. In short, without having had occasion for, or perhaps without producing a *Brutus*, they will soon meet with a *Cæsar*, and will then feelingly regret under the weight of a national despotism, the yoke of a distant government which had strength sufficient to protect, though it was too weak to oppress them.

In the next place, the first manœuvre of the Americans as independent states, will be to open an asylum to Europeans; and this will be an endless source of emigration from the old to the new world. The crowd of active and restless minds, whom the hopes of a better fortune, and the dawn of liberty in a rising state, may attract to the Western Hemisphere, will not fail to multiply the seeds of disorder there; they will carry with them their vices, their avidity, their aversion to repose as well as to useful labor, and their facility

facility to adopt new projects. In short, they will be found to afford more accomplices to the ambition of a tyrant, than useful promoters of agriculture and commerce.

But this is not all. It is well known how baneful such transplantations are to the generation which experiences them; and they will be more especially so in America, where cultivation is already extended over the best and most fertile parts of the continent. The new comers will be admitted only to the refuse of the ancient

cient inhabitants, and of course will be obliged to take up their abode on some unfruitful soil, or in those swamps which are so fatal to the stranger. And here the emigrants, weakened by a change of nourishment and climate, and oppressed by penury and disease, will soon be rendered odious by their complaints, and suspicious by their murmurings, till at length they will sicken and die, lamenting the error that drew them to so inhospitable a shore. Their posterity will probably be few in number, so that although Europe will have lost, America will be hardly said to have

have gained them; and the former being in this manner evacuated, and having constantly those fiscal charges to support, with which the preceding reigns will not have failed to load their posterity, the contributions must necessarily be increased in proportion as the number of contributors is diminished; and who knows to what catastrophes this unfortunate remnant may be reduced by an excess of misery and oppression?

Supposing however these Speculations to be ill founded, and that the
new

new world should be able to procure from its own stock a population, which shall not materially affect the rest of the universe, still it must be acknowledged, that America, when well peopled, will no longer have any occasion for the productions or assistance of Europe. Its climate, modified even in its rudest parts by the hand of labour, and rendered profitable in others by an industrious cultivation, will soon enable it to dispense with the dangerous and fatiguing commerce of our seas. Its inhabitants, surrounded by seas which abound with fish; masters
of

of the richest mines; in the neighbourhood of the West Indies; and performing in two months, with winds that are constantly in their favor, voyages which are always tedious, and very often dangerous, to European ships; receiving without trouble, and without danger, on the one hand sugar, indigo, and the most delicious fruits; and on the other spices, precious stones, and fine linen; and thus drawing to them the riches and luxuries of the two Hemispheres, will soon become the masters of our destiny.

It

It will be then from the necessity of things that we shall depend on them, more than ever they depended on us, through the rage, or if you will, the wisdom of our prohibitive laws. It will be no longer by *Cairo* or the *Cape of Good Hope*, that we shall procure the treasures of *Africa*, or the perfumed productions of *Asia*; but from factories established in the seas of *America*—And alas! what return shall we be able to make for these things to the Lords of *Brazil*, and the proprietors of *Peru*?

But

But their abounding with gold and diamonds will be far from constituting the whole of their superiority over us ; they will add to these, all the powers which states, as well as individuals, derive from the vigor of youth and a consciousness of prosperity. Their splendor being the effect of a rapid revolution ; and not having passed through the slow and almost imperceptible gradations which have marked the rise of other nations, they will find themselves on a sudden in the full possession of maturity, and this, with all
the

the energy of a youthful constitution. Even their intestine divisions will perhaps have the salutary effect of preventing the too speedy progress of corruption amongst them.

Then, they will soon aim at crushing the languid powers of Europe: they will come to astonish and conquer their confused metropolis, deploring in indigent old age the ingratitude of her children; or if they should not deign to avenge the evils she occasioned to their predecessors, she will owe her safety to her weakness. She will

will not be conquered by them because she will be no longer an object worthy of subjection. The rude and barbarous state into which she will be fallen, will serve only to disgust the possessors of the most brilliant Empire the art of politics has as yet given birth to.

The time of such a revolution is uncertain; but it will be inevitable if America should become flourishing and independent. We leave to the politicians of Europe to determine how far reason and justice and humanity will permit them to accelerate or

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retard its accomplishment. — They are to judge too whether the present generation in concurring towards it, will avoid more ills than they render certain to posterity ; whether it is still in their power to prevent it, and whether our Ministers, absorbed in their little Speculations of the day, have not been too inattentive to a revolution which would seem to be more interesting and critical, than any which the annals of the world can present us with from the time of its civilization.

SECTION II.

*Of the present state of LEGISLATION
in Europe.*

WHATEVER influence the
destiny of *America* may one
day be expected to produce on the rest
of the globe, and especially on Europe,
yet these events may still be confi-
dered as far distant. The present ge-
neration is pretty secure from evils

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which

which seem only to threaten their descendants. But the case is different with Legislation. This is the concern of every moment, and it is hardly possible to view it with indifference, or to consider, without shuddering, the mistakes it may be liable to commit, or the abuses it may be tempted to tolerate. The happiness of every one of us, and likewise of our families and friends, and indeed all that is dear to us, depends on this imperious power. We ought therefore to wish for its being perfect. But alas! we are as yet very far, not only from
this

this perfection, but from the preliminaries which lead to it. We may, perhaps, go so far as to say, that it does not even exist in Europe.

As to that which relates to Administration, and which determines the rights of the Sovereign and those of the people, if we except *England* and *Denmark*, it is wholly unknown in every other nation. These two are indeed arrived, the one by giving up to, and the other by disputing every thing with their Kings, at least, at a knowledge of what the crown is, and

how the individual is to be considered who wears it. In every other country nothing can be more uncertain than either of these.

In *France*, for instance, the Monarch styles himself the Nation, the Parliaments stile themselves the Nation, and so do the Nobility; and the Nation itself is unable to say what it is. In waiting for the clearing up of this point, every thing is confused, and becomes the subject of pretensions and disputes. The Royal Prerogative, incessantly advancing or retreating, knows

no limits it is unable to pass, nor boundaries to which it may not be brought back.

It is the same thing in *Spain*, *Germany*, &c. where the Sovereigns have constantly some right to invade or defend: they live with their subjects as with an enemy, from whom every prize is lawful; they consider the establishment of a new impost as a spoil, and the annihilation of a privilege as a trophy. In this kind of intestine war which effectually roots out confidence and affection from either party, the

success of the Prince is more disgraceful than his defeat would be.

In matters of *Jurisprudence*, by which the lives and properties of individuals are protected, the confusion is, if possible, still more alarming. *Prussia*, *Sardinia*, and *Russia* have attempted some improvements on this head, which do honour to their Sovereigns. Of all the other Nations, there is perhaps not one which has a Code of Laws founded on reflexion, or which is agreeable either to reason or humanity.

Uncouth

Uncouth and barbarous customs, founded on the capriciousness of ignorance and stupidity, in the remote times of foedal anarchy, and altogether incompatible with the changes which have since taken place in society; these are our national laws. Their irregularity and multiplicity bring them every moment into contradiction with each other, and still more so with common sense.

The confusion is every day increasing by the addition of new laws and
the

the decisions of our courts; all which afford an ample field to the subterfuges of chicanery. In short, the *Roman law*, or rather the extravagant compilation made under that name by a perverse Civilian and a stupid Emperor having preserved in some countries the authority of law, and being quoted by the practitioners of all countries, seems to put a finishing hand to this disorder, and to render it as dangerous as it is irremediable.

If, in the matter of *punishments*, some few hands, more daring than the
rest,

rest, have ventured to touch the subject of Jurisprudence, they have served only to render it at once absurd and atrocious. The *torture*, an invention which owes its origin to Republican despotism, has indeed been abolished by two female Sovereigns in two of the principal dominions of our Hemisphere: but in many other countries it still continues to have its apologists. Notwithstanding the luminous writings which have been published of late years on this and many other parts of our criminal laws, it preserves almost in every nation its scan-

scandalous imperfection and barbarity.

In *France*, as well as in many other parts of Europe, the process in criminal matters depends on a single man who informs and hears the accusers, and who decrees against the prisoner; and who, though unable to take from him his property, is authorized to deprive him of the sweets of liberty and to plunge him into a dungeon. Such proceedings, have rather the appearance of a conspiracy between a Judge and the Witnesses against an innocent man,

man, than of the inquiries of Justice for the conviction of a criminal.

In *England*, this inconvenience and the torture are equally unknown. But in their stead we meet with another which is perhaps not less alarming; and this is the rapidity with which the forms of Justice are carried on. In a single day the process, which is to decide on the life of an individual, is both begun and ended. In one day the Judges and Jury assemble, the Witnesses are summoned and heard, and the Culprit is interrogated, and

con-

condemned or acquitted. The whole of such a transaction is indeed in publick, but this celerity is not the less suspicious on that account, whether by its being prejudicial to innocence or favouring the impunity of a crime.

SECTION III.

*Of the present state of the MILITARY
ESTABLISHMENT in Europe.*

ALEXANDER, with forty thousand men, undertook to conquer the greatest part of the known world, and succeeded in his undertaking. Five legions, which did not exceed that number of soldiers, composed the most powerful of the Roman armies.

There

There were indeed forty at the battle in which the virtuous *Brutus* sealed the triumph of the cowardly *Octavius* with his blood. But this momentary effort of expiring liberty, and of despotism favoured by fortune, had no influence on the maxims of government. Till the invasions of the barbarians, the provinces were always secured and protected, in the manner they had been subdued, by small armies.

What a difference do the present times exhibit! There are five powers in Europe,

rope, each of which maintains a greater
 number of troops even in time of
 peace, than ever appeared under the
 banners of the *Cæsars* on the most
 cruel and critical occasions. At the
 first beat of drum the quantity increases
 to a degree one can hardly venture to
 calculate. All this would seem to
 realize what historians relate, or what
 the imagination supposes of those de-
 luges of barbarians, who poured by
 millions into the country to which
 their capriciousness directed them.
 There were maintained in Europe,
 during the whole of the last war,

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more

more than twelve hundred thousand men.

These devouring locusts are themselves devoured by the train of diseases induced by misery and debauchery; and by the mode of fighting, which becomes more destructive in proportion as the instruments of destruction are rendered more perfect. At the close of every campaign it becomes necessary not only to recruit, but to create anew, whole regiments; and if to these we join all the other calamities which are the inevitable consequences

quences of war, such as the devastation of the countries in which it is carried on, and likewise of those which are seemingly in peace, but which suffer no less from the drain of men and money, than the others do from the carnage carried on in them; and lastly, the destruction of innocence and population, which the libertinism of an army never fails to spread over a country; we shall then be convinced, that a single period, such as that from 1756 to 1762, swallowed up more men than would be required to people several worlds.

The privilege granted to the Sovereigns of Europe, or rather usurped by their Ministers, of raising an indefinite number of troops, is perhaps one of the most cruel evils that afflict our continent. To this source we may trace the establishment of a Militia in some countries, which is a modern and tyrannical institution. It forces the peaceful husbandman from his plough, and the weak and industrious artist from his loom, and devotes them to a profession which requires a ferocity of disposition and great strength of temperament. To the same source
likewise

likewise we may impute the inconstancy or pride which tempts men to elude this species of slavery, and the pretended laws, which, considering as a crime the violation of an engagement extorted by force, allot the same punishment to the deserter as to the murderer.

Let a Republic call together all her citizens to the assistance of the state, and when the Sovereignty is attacked let her arm all the hands that partake of it; let her punish with death the traitor who, prostituting his reputation

and conscience, sells his services to the enemies of his country; in all this she will do only what is just and reasonable. The deserter from Rome or Athens had enjoyed all the privileges against which he was conspiring: he had assented to the law which pronounced the pain of death against the crime of which he was guilty, so that he was wounding, not only the state, but his own interest and dignity. But the hireling whose services are purchased, or the unhappy wretch whom a black billet has assigned over to the sub-delegate appointed to decimate the village

village in which he lived, can have no interest in the dispute they are carried forth to support; and the latter has never felt any inclination to sell either his blood or his liberty. The violence which metamorphoses him into a warrior, depriving him of every thing and giving him nothing, surely cannot bind him. The law which condemns such a man to be hanged or to be shot for desertion, is truly an assassination.

But this is not all. Of those who remain constantly under the banner

many will be carried off in battle, or by the mines in sieges, or by wounds and sickness in the hospital, and thus will be lost to their country. They who survive will perhaps become still more destructive to it by their existence. If discharged at the close of the war they become the most baneful of its enemies. Justice finds herself obliged to declare war against them, and after having escaped from battle, they very often terminate their days disgracefully at the gallows.

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If, instead of this, they are still kept embodied, the imperious power of military discipline renders them the tyrants of their country, after they have served to protect it from its rivals. A Soldier is no sooner enlisted, and instructed in the manœuvres of his profession, than he becomes, as it were, a mere machine, and is no longer permitted to use even his reason. Much has been said against the Monks, and they have been abused on every side. But are Soldiers less devoted than our Priests to passive obedience? Our Monks have, at least, ease and
 opulence

opulence by way of indemnity. They are secure of a peaceful life and of a subsistence, of which nothing can deprive them. Nay, what is more than this, these pious automata submit themselves to a yoke fabricated by religion, and devote themselves, at least, to the profession of peace and virtue.

But neither of these motives will be found to actuate the Soldier. In attaching himself to a military life he professedly cultivates the most violent passions. His leading duty, and his greatest merit, consist in his being as
deaf

deaf and as pitiless, and as obedient as his musket. If his commanding officer should direct him to plunge his bayonet into his father's breast, there would be no choice left for him between parricide and mutiny. He would be necessitated to begin with the crime, and at the least sigh that might escape him, the iron rod of power, by which he is subjected, would punish him, not for murder, but remorse. This is a tremendous but an indisputable truth, on which the Sovereigns of Europe would do well to meditate. This murderous apparatus

ratus is of little consequence to them, and they are cruelly deceived, if they are taught that it is essential to their being either venerated or obeyed. It is to their Ministers only that it is useful, because as these enjoy only a borrowed authority, and their aim is to accumulate honors and wealth to themselves, and to elevate their creatures at the expence of their rivals, they find themselves unable to stifle complaints but by terror, or to prevent resistance but by force. Battalions are therefore as essential to the
Ministers

Ministers of an arbitrary government,
as general warrants.

But the Prince, to whom the law
serves for protection, and whose interest
and honor are inseparable from
those of the state, who can have no
other wish than that of doing good,
nor any other want than that of being
instructed, ought to be more
alarmed even than his people at these
barriers which separate him from them.
The example of the ancient Masters
of the world ought surely to impress
those Sovereigns with terror, who
give,

give, with so much imprudence, into the luxury of standing armies. When the Emperors began to have only Soldiers for their confidents, they had only enemies for subjects. They were able indeed to do every thing against the nation, but the troops were able to do every thing against them. The laws they had annihilated were no longer a security against revolt, and those terrible pillars of authority imbrued the throne with blood much oftener than they defended it.

And

And what is still more wonderful, these mercenary agents of destruction, have lost as much, and perhaps more than the people, by the depravity that multiplies them. Their number, by rendering them redoubtable, serves likewise to depreciate them; and the facility with which they are procured degrades them in the eyes of their chiefs. The necessity of having numerous armies, has gradually given rise to the invention and success of two of the most inconceivable operations that politicians have, perhaps, ever ventured to hazard.

The

The first of these is the diminution of the pay of the Soldiery, extenuated, now-a-days, to such a degree, that the most curious, but the most difficult of all the problems of oeconomy, would be to know how a stipendiary in uniform is able to live with his pay.

It is not that any thing has apparently been taken from the Soldier's pay; on the contrary, some steps seem to have been taken towards increasing it. But by attaching themselves to ancient denominations, whilst the true value of money was changing;

ing; by continuing the daily pay of a Soldier at five or six sols *, as in the fifteenth century, whilst the articles of life are twenty, perhaps thirty times dearer than they were at that time: by supporting this trick by the resources afforded by military discipline against the multitude it contains, Ministers have, at length, been enabled to render the profession which disposes of the lives of the people, a real slavery, which does not even procure to its victims the means of supporting their own.

* Six sols, about three pence sterling. This is the daily pay of a French Soldier. T.

In order to form an idea of the situation of our Soldiers, compared with that of our predecessors, let us inquire what was the pay of a Soldier at some determinate period of history; in the reign of Lewis the XIth, for instance, a celebrated reign which has been so unjustly calumniated, because the Sovereign himself was vicious.

In those days, a *Bowman* received four French livres every month; his pay therefore amounted to forty-eight livres *per ann.* and with this he was obliged to supply himself with cloaths
and

and arms and nourishment. But in the times we are speaking of, a quarter of wheat sold only at twenty sols *, the common wine at 30 sols, and an ell of good ordinary cloth at twenty-two or twenty-four sols †.

The Soldier, therefore, supposing him to be a single man, who drank two barrels of wine, and consumed three quarters of wheat, and afforded himself a good suit of cloaths every

* Twenty sols make a livre of the French money, which is equal to about ten pence half-penny, so that forty-eight livres are equivalent to forty shillings sterling.

† See the history of the times.

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year

year, expended on these articles only about a quarter of his pay. The surplus of thirty-six livres, allowing for the difference in the value of money between those times and the present, gave him a yearly income equivalent to six hundred livres at this period; and with this he was enabled not only to procure all the necessaries of life, but even to administer to his pleasures, if he was voluptuous; or to raise a fund for old age, if he was prudent and oeconomical.

And

And if he was married; he was able to educate his children and to satisfy the little whims of his wife, who, on her side, by her industry and good management, contributed to the happiness of the family *.

But

* At a distance from my cabinet, and deprived of my books and the greatest part of my papers, I am able to quote only from memory. I am pretty clear, however, that I am not deceived on these points. If I make any mistake, it can only be in misapplying the prices of the articles I mention, but not so as to make any difference in the total. The inference will, at any rate, be the same, and it will be equally certain, that the situation of a Soldier in those days was equivalent to one of our sedentary revenue officers who receives an hundred pistoles every year; and, that a stipendiary, in those times, scarcely receives a tenth part of what was paid to a Satellit of Lewis the XIth.

F 3

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But the situation of our troops at the present period, is very different from

I am aware that writers differ very much on this head, because none of them, in my opinion, have taken the right steps to find out the truth. The only way to demonstrate this matter, seems to me to be as follows :

The mark of silver, under Lewis the XIth, was valued at about ten livres. Wheat, at that time, as we have already observed, sold at a livre the quarter; there were therefore ten of these quarters for a mark. Now-a-days the mark is valued at fifty-two livres, and the quarter of wheat at about twenty livres. There will be therefore only about two quarters and a half for a mark. Supposing that a Soldier at this period were to receive five marks, yet even with this advance, he would be unable to procure no more than twelve or thirteen quarters of wheat. He would still be three times as poor as the Soldier of the fifteenth century.

But

from this. Their pay is consumed by the four and twenty ounces of bread, and the eight ounces of bad meat, which are allowed them for their daily subsistence: and when to this there is added, a suit of coarse cloth without substance, furnished by some ministerial contractor, who is autho-

But it will be found that he does not receive so much as five marks. Five sols *per diem* are scarcely equivalent to two marks; so that he can procure only five quarters of wheat in the year. Our Infantry have therefore only a tenth of what the Successor of Charles the VIIth. allowed to his troops. The profession of a Soldier was, indeed, in those days, a very good one; but on the other hand, that of a Minister was somewhat less lucrative than it is now.

rized to cheat with impunity, they are supposed to be treated with magnificence. Hence it is, that wretchedness, ignominy and beggary, form the whole of their future prospects, and, that a daily famine constitutes the whole of their present enjoyment. There are people who go so far as to justify this oeconomy by calculation. I have heard the Colonel of a regiment observe very coolly at table, that a Soldier having but little work to do, required but little aliment; and, that if his men had strength enough to present themselves properly on the parade,

rade, he was satisfied. This is a little in the stile of *Harpagon*, who thinks it needless to feed his horses when they don't work.

As a proof that this inconceivable Speculation is founded on serious calculations, we may instance one of its first powers in Europe, which having, during the last war, added four ounces of rice to the daily allowance of the troops, suppressed this addition at the peace. More attention is paid to horses: they have uniformly the same quantity of food, because their wants are acknowledged.

ledged to be always the same. If it should be asked, why the evidence, which has preserved to these animals the integrity of their portion, has not produced the same effect in favour of men? the reason may be easily pointed out. It is, that however disciplinable the former of these are, yet education cannot be brought to curb their stomachs so easily as it does their mouths or their legs; a miracle, which the greater perfection of human nature alone can enable it to accomplish.

But

But here is another kind of Speculation, still more strange than the other. The vanity interested in commanding three hundred thousand muskets borne by machines in uniform, has not only led to attempt a diminution of the daily subsistence of these wretches, but likewise the value of the individual himself. Not contented with contracting the little pittance which is to support the life of the Soldier, Ministers are become still more avaricious in the means that are to protect him from death. They have, at length, carried their refinements so far, as to
expose

expose him to the enemy without defence; because it would be more expensive to shield him with armour, than to replace him.

This is altogether a novel idea, and well deserves to be inquired into.

The most pitiless conquerors of former ages, and who were so prodigal of human blood, were attentive, however, to the preservation of their Soldiers. Their heads were secured by casques, and their breasts with coats of mail. To these fixed ramparts
there

there was added a moveable preservative, which defended the other two: the arm, loaded with a buckler, served to turn aside the swords and the javelins of the enemy; and the Soldier, who returned victorious to his tent, owed his safety and glory to this triple defence, which had, perhaps, kept off the hand of death an hundred times in the course of the battle.

But since a simple province of the Roman Empire assembles under its banners, on the most trifling occasion, more mercenaries, than that Empire
ever

ever had of Citizens, coats of mail have been in disuse in battles and sieges. From the moment that our modern imitators of *Salmones* began to deal out a thunder, which is more horrible and destructive than that of heaven; the unfortunate wretches, who have devoted themselves to this infernal service, have laid aside the use of armour.

It has been argued, that the motives to this change were to be sought for in the violence of the artillery. It has been said, for instance, that casques
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and helmets, from the impetuosity with which a cannon shot acts on the object it strikes, might be rendered, not the means of defence, but of greater carnage. An infinite number of reasonings have indeed been adopted on this subject, and even by military people; which would appear strange, if every day's observation did not serve to convince us, that of all the arts, men generally inquire the least minutely into those which they practice every day.

Were we even to allow, that a cannon ball should be able to spread the
splinters

splinters of the metal it touches, laterally, and in this manner increase the operation of death on every side; yet, this objection would not hold good in the case of musquetry or of the sword and bayonet. And even with the large artillery, this destructive explosion of the casque or helmet would never take place. If a cannon ball strikes against a large stone, or a bomb sinks into the earth by its weight and momentum, and then tears it by its explosion, every thing within the reach of this momentary volcano is torn or destroyed. But the surface of
metal

metal not affording a brittle substance like the stone, or a loose and easily separable substance like the earth, will not be susceptible of so dangerous an extension. The bullet never spreads the parts of the helmet it destroys: that part of it which it touches it carries away together with the breast that it covered; but as these deplorable fragments have neither its rapidity, nor its hardness or form, they are soon left behind, and fall at no great distance from the bleeding trunk to which they belonged: they can therefore not be accused of adding to the ravages of

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the bullet, but will constantly weaken its momentum by their weight and resistance. The nakedness of our armies, when they go to expose themselves to death, is therefore not the fruit of Speculations founded either on reason or humanity.

The true motives for such an economy are to be sought for in a different channel.—By increasing the number of troops, Ministers have gradually been enabled to expend on an entire company, only the same pay that was formerly required to support a
single

single individual. The wretches who protect their masters ill-gotten treasures, and who are the instruments of his despotism, have themselves barely a sufficiency of bread for their support. That men should be so ill-treated, and at the same time so supple, is the effect of discipline, vanity, prejudice, and libertinism. But the contractors for an army will not be found to have the same pliability. They will never be induced to part with their copper, at the price for which a Soldier sells himself: a recruit may be procured for ten crowns, but to supply

him with armour would be the expence of thirty. Speculative Ministers have, therefore, made a very simple calculation. Finding it much cheaper to recruit and support their troops than to cloath them in bronze, they adopted the oeconomy of exposing them in a defenceless state to the fire of the artillery. Thus they are enabled to keep up large standing armies, comparatively, at a small expence; and if they have any fears about the artillery, they are founded wholly on the dearness of salt petre.

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The preceding reflections may be equally well applied to the marine. This, of all the arts which have been transmitted to us by the antients, has been the most improved by the industry of the Moderns. It is hardly possible, even for the imagination itself, to conceive any thing more wonderful, than the idea of a first rate ship of war conveying an army from one hemisphere to the other, resisting both the sea and the winds, vomiting out fire on every side, and spreading desolation and death afar off even on the land.

Were we to enter into all the details of its construction, and to examine all the variety of parts which serve at once to give lightness and strength to so enormous a mass, our admiration might lead us to consider it rather as a present from the Divinity, than as the work of men's hands. But when we reflect on its destination, and passing down between the decks, observe the savage manners of the Sailors; their depravity and want of sensibility; the diseases to which their debauchery and a sea-faring life expose them; when we consider, that of those who go out
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on the voyage, few perhaps will return home again without having experienced or occasioned calamities which would seem fabulous even in romance; we shall then be induced to attribute this invention to some infernal genius; lamenting, at the same time, the fatality which has furnished men with so many means of destroying, and so few of preserving themselves.

In most parts of Europe, the same system of oeconomy is adopted in the marine as in the army department.

The pay of a Sailor is indeed better now than it was in the days of Columbus; unlike the Soldier, he is essential to the peaceful operations of commerce, as well as of war; and this has given rise to a sort of rivalry between the Government and the trading part of each nation, which turns out to the advantage of the Seamen; so that Sailors, in general, are better paid, and better fed, than Soldiers.

But as the merchant's service is much milder, and at the same time
more

more lucrative than that of Government, Ships of war would, perhaps, never be fully equipped, if Seamen were permitted a freedom of choice in this matter. Other means have therefore been adopted: in France, the *Classes*; and in England, *Press Warrants*, are the means of procuring men for the navy.

The *Classes* devote to this service all those who have the misfortune to be born under the denomination of Sailor, within a certain distance from the sea; so that no man can serve in the merchant's service,

vice, who is not registered in the Admiralty books: and from these *Classes* the King's ships are supplied with men, whenever there is occasion. This method is indeed repugnant to liberty, but the *Press* is repugnant both to the laws and humanity.

At the bare order of the Minister, without notice and without ceremony, troops of armed men pour into the sea ports of Great Britain, and seize on every one who has the physiognomy of a Sailor. This title alone seems to authorise every kind of violence.

They

They even go so far as to board merchant ships, and to carry away, publickly and by force, the whole of the equipage. The merchant, by this kind of civil war, sees all his Speculations, and perhaps his fortune, destroyed. In the mean time commerce is found to languish, and the necessities of life increasing in price become a real tax to the people.

But this is not all. The Press Gangs sometimes meet with resistance, and in the frays which ensue, there are very often several persons killed or wounded

wounded on both sides. The lives of individuals are, in general, more secure in England than in any other country ; but in the case of Press Gangs, murder is usually winked at. Justice makes no inquiries on the subject: so that, on the borders of the Thames, the most useful members of the State may be said to be excluded from the protection of the laws.

The abuse in France, in the *Classes*, is neither so much felt nor so scandalous as this of *Press Warrants*. It would seem as if the two kingdoms, rivals

rivals in every other matter, were likewise disputing which should adopt the most barbarous method of procuring defenders to the State; and in this disgraceful contention England has confessedly the superiority.

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SECTION IV.

Of the state of FINANCES in Europe.

THE augmentation of the military establishment necessarily occasions an increase of the taxes. The Sovereign who wishes to levy many troops, must at the same time find out the means of raising much money. The capacity of a Minister, now-a-days, seems to be measured by his ingenuity

ingenuity in inventing new modes of taxation; and almost the sole object of debate, in the most august counsels in Europe, is how to plunder the honest and industrious subject with ease and impunity.

This abuse is, without doubt, a grievous one: it announces to posterity, either a state of rigorous slavery, or an independency which will be the fruit of many a civil commotion. But this is by no means the only thing capable of exciting our wonder on a view of this matter. A confederate

rate and impartial spectator will be still more astonished, when he observes the obscurity of the rights on which taxation is founded, and the confusion which prevails in this branch of Administration throughout Europe. Ministers seem to acknowledge their incapacity to reform in this matter; and in two of the principal States of Europe, we see the National Debt augmented to such a degree that if every inhabitant of those states were to be sold, head by head; and the whole of their lands, acre by acre; it is very doubtful, whether their product would
be

be sufficient to liquidate the Debt to which the soil and its cultivators are subjected.

With respect to the obscurity which prevails in Financing, and the weakness of Ministers in suffering a State to be gradually undermined by it, instead of attempting to remedy it by regularity and oeconomy; these are old and almost incurable evils: it is a grievance which has been long felt, but in these times its malignity seems to be increased. The variation in the value of money, together with the in-

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creased price of the necessaries of life, having diminished the publick revenues: and the increase of pomp and luxury having, at the same time augmented the expences of life, it became necessary to find out a succedaneum.

Clear, simple taxes, the produce and extent of which might have been easily stated, would have been too alarming to the subject. Were it proposed to an individual to give up a quarter of his possessions to his Sovereign, he would consider the proposer as a plunderer and a tyrant. The aim
of

of Ministers has therefore been to levy, by duties on a thousand different articles, a sum of money, which would terrify the people were it to be collected by a single tax. The Act of Parliament by which a new tax is imposed, serves to stifle discontent, and thus the pockets of the subject, in the course of every year, are insensibly drained of half their revenue. In this ingenious manœuvre, which is so insulting to the human mind, consists the whole secret of Financing. We are told by Suetonius, that an Intendant of the Gauls under Augustus, per-

ceiving that the taxes were paid in his province every month, contrived to levy fourteen in the course of the year. By this single operation he acquired a sixteenth of the publick revenue. It would seem as if our modern Ministers had followed this man's example.

But in order to render this subtilty lucrative, it became necessary to support it by force. This gave rise to the invention of *Smuggling*; to the erecting it into a crime; and likewise to

to the laws, which in many countries punish the smuggler with death. The pretended despotism of Asia is a stranger to this species of tyranny and injustice ; it is peculiar to those people, who consider themselves as the most civilized and enlightened of the globe.

In Great Britain, indeed, the introduction of prohibited goods has never yet been considered as a capital offence. But as the Custom-house officer has a right, in case of resistance, to kill as

well as the Press Gangs ; as the house of a Citizen, which in every other country is considered and respected as a sacred asylum, is not secure in this from the oppressive tyranny of a search warrant, it would seem that the English can have no reasonable claims to an exception in their favour in this matter.

It will be still worse if we examine the system of Europe on the subject of the *National Debt*. The art of transmitting a load of this sort from
one

one generation to the other, and of adding continually to it, is an invention which is altogether due to the Moderns. It is, indeed, peculiar to the eighteenth century, and will, probably, be considered hereafter as one of its most distinguishing characteristics. There are few Governments, at present, which are not more or less influenced by it; but it is in France and England that its effects are the most felt. Supposing, however, the National Debt of each of these two States to be equal, still their engage-

ments and danger will appear to be far from being the same.

In Great Britain, we shall find that the whole kingdom stands engaged as a security for its contracts; but this is not the case with France. If the latter of these groans under a frightful load of Debts, contracted during the two last reigns, the evil is the result of a defective Legislation, which seems to have no fixed and clear ideas of Government.

It

It is a truth, founded on received principles, and acknowledged in every country, where the crown is hereditary, and the Administration absolute, that the reigning Prince has only a temporary interest in the revenues of the State. He can dispose neither of the whole, nor of any of its parts; it is, or ought to be, transmitted entire to the next legal Successor. Till the beginning of the present century, however, nobody had been led to investigate this simple question; because, before that period, Sovereigns had ventured to borrow money only by indirect

rect means, and with a very sparing hand. Lewis the XIIth, and Francis the Ist, had dared to sell only a few posts, and to alienate a few trifling estates; and in each of these ways the lenders of the money were those who ran the greatest risk. Under Henry the IIIrd, the incroachment was more daring; but so far was the Body of the Nation considered as standing engaged for the payment of the King's or the Minister's Debts, that the Italian Usurers, who advanced the money, were permitted to receive the revenues of the State; not, however, as a security

city for their loans, but as the easiest and readiest way to reimburse them.

The virtuous Sully, who became after a series of difficulties the principal Minister of Henry the IVth, a Prince, by the bye, who might be said to have purchased rather than conquered his crown, aimed at liquidating the Debts of the Sovereign in the easiest manner. Under Lewis the XIIIth, and during the minority of Lewis the XIVth, employments and titles, of every kind, were disposed of in the most disgraceful manner; but hardly
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any loans were made by the Sovereign, which were supposed to affect the Nation. Lewis the XIVth, when he assumed the reins of government, became voluptuous, ambitious, and perverse in his operations. He was truly the first Sovereign in France who ventured to abuse the confidence of the publick to a degree which has never yet been paralleled in any country.

At his death, his obligations ought to have died with him, and then the Nation would have been in some
measure

measure relieved from the calamities under which it was groaning. But the Prince who succeeded him was in his infancy, and the *Regent* who enjoyed only a temporary possession of the Sovereign authority, surrounded by enemies, wanting enough of resolution to attempt a reformation of the evil; and not being aware perhaps of the principle we have just now established, did not perceive how just, and humane, and useful, and how preferable, in every sense, such an operation would have been to the system of Financing with which he amused

amused and ruined the kingdom. He seemed to be of opinion that the present reign was answerable for the Debts of the preceding one, and that it was, of course, necessary either to pay them off or support them.

This step led to the establishment of an axiom, of which few people in these times venture to suspect the propriety: and this is, that no distinction ought to be made between the *Monarchy* and the *Monarch*. This datum constituted the basis of all the operations of the reign of Lewis the XVth;

XVth; and both that Prince and his Ministers considered themselves as the absolute masters of the possessions of the subject. If we look into History, we shall find no epocha in which a greater number of taxes and duties have been laid on, and with less formality or more despotism than in the period I allude to. Lewis the XVth went so far as to declare publickly, in an assembly which had the reputation of being a National one, that the Nation centered wholly in himself. Many were the Men of the Robe who heard this declaration, but not one of them
was

was sufficiently enlightened or courageous, either then or since, to point out the essential and unalterable distinction which exists from the very nature of things between those two objects. A prejudice authorized by such examples, and so well supported, has therefore prevailed. The whole French Nation seem now to be seriously of opinion, that a King of France has as many pledges as subjects; and the reigning Monarch has been easily induced to think, that neither equity nor benevolence will permit him to separate the Debts of his ancestors from
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the Crown. Such a conduct would be commendable in a man in private life, who comes to the possession of an estate incumbered with his father's Debts, and who prefers the honor of the author of his days to his own personal ease. What he gives is his own, and it is only by diminishing his own income and expences that he can be liberal to his father's creditors. But this is neither the situation nor the duty of a King. If he undertakes to pay the Debts of his Predecessor, he can do it only by oppressing his subjects ; and his duties and engagements

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to these ought surely to outweigh any private feelings for the credit of his ancestors.

This mistaken idea is productive of the most melancholy effects. Still, however, I will allow, that it does honor to the person who has been led to adopt it. The motive which served as a pretext to it renders him respectable: the young Prince flatters himself he was fulfilling his duty, and satisfying the calls of piety and justice. But how much happier would it have been for his people, and of course

course for himself, if some bold and patriotic voice, in pointing out the truth he was searching after, had ventured to have said to him: “ Prince, “ you are destined by Providence to “ wear a crown, which is delivered to “ you free and untainted. Employ “ yourself about what is past only “ with a view to bury it in oblivion; “ and let all your future aims be to “ realize the hopes with which your “ virtues have inspired your subjects. “ Justice, and the laws of your coun- “ try, declare you acquitted from “ every pecuniary engagement con-

“tracted in the preceding reign * : You
 “have therefore only to endeavour, by
 “the oeconomy of your Administra-
 “tion, to render it unnecessary for
 “your Successor to avail himself of the
 “same privilege.”

* I wish to have my meaning properly understood here. I allude chiefly to publick loans, &c. but I except *pensions* granted for services rendered to the State, and which, of course, ought to be charged to the Nation; and, in my opinion, this is the only case in which the reigning Prince can make any engagements of this sort, which shall hold good after his decease. I therefore consider it as the only exception to the rigorous equity which annihilates all the Debts of a Crown, every time it changes its possessor.

Such

Such a manœuvre, would, as I have just now proved, in every respect be well founded. It would, at any rate, be more equitable than the *nullum tempus* law, which relates to the Crown lands, and which has ever been considered as an indisputable privilege of the Prince. If a Sovereign is excluded from the right of alienating the estates of his own family, he has surely a much less right to alienate the possessions of his subjects; as is evidently done by perpetuating a National Debt.

Many individuals would indeed suffer by such a reformation; but the rigour of Justice would be softened by the variety of political advantages that would arise from it. The Nation would soon learn to bless the author of it. The suppression of oppressive taxes, the re-establishment of good order, the return of plenty, and the restoration even of manners would be the invaluable fruits of a momentary convulsion.

These good effects would be gratefully acknowledged by posterity; for whom,
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by the increasing load of our National Debt, we are preparing an infinite variety of evils: and were the precedent once thus firmly established, that in public loans, it is the *King*, and not the *Kingdom*, who stands engaged, it would check the profligacy both of Kings and Ministers. To these we may add another good effect, that of diminishing the rage for stock jobbing, which affords employment to so many speculative adventurers, is so inimical to manners and commerce, and so frequently productive either of a disgraceful bankruptcy and ruin, or of a sud-

den and no less shameful acquisition of fortune, both of which are equally repugnant to the good of Society in general.

In short, a very interesting difference between these two Speculations, is, that in the one, two successive good reigns would restore the vigor of the State; and the influence of a vicious reign dying away with it, the prodigality of a deceased Prince would be no obstacle to the good intentions of his Successors; whereas, in these days, the evils of a wicked Admini-

Administration necessarily survive it ; and it is at the expence of the people that the benevolent disposition of a *Titus* is enabled to pay for the dissipation of a *Tiberius*.

Whoever will reflect impartially on this right (which does not seem hitherto to have been properly understood or attended to) of distinguishing between the Sovereign and the Crown, will perceive in it one of the most precious advantages of an absolute Monarchy. It does by no means belong to those States which approach
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to the Republican form of Government, and in which the Nation really is, or is supposed to be represented by an assembly chosen by itself, and which of course votes in the name and with the consent of the Nation; and this is one of the greatest misfortunes of such a form of Government. England, for instance, is at this instant in such a situation. It is the people who expend the money; and it is likewise the people who borrow the money, and stand engaged for it. The creditors can have no claim on the Crown here, any more than in France; but, then in lieu

lieu of this, their claims extend to the whole Nation, which stands pledged in all its parts for the pecuniary engagements contracted by its Parliament.

The annihilation of the publick Debt at each succession, would, in *France*, be a prudent, humane and legal operation; whereas in *England* it would be a disgraceful and criminal bankruptcy; a most essential difference this, between the two Empires, and which, independent of their internal resources, cannot fail in the end to produce a most tremendous one in
their

their destiny. It would be curious to graduate the progress of the Two Nations on this head. If it be strange that the true principles I have pointed out should be so little known in the one, it is surely not less wonderful that so little pains should be taken in the other, to avoid the calamities with which it is threatened.

S E C-

SECTION V.

Of COMMERCE.

COMMERCE, till the sixteenth century, was held in no consideration, especially in Monarchies. It might be compared to an useful but neglected slave, who performed his functions in obscurity and at a distance from the masters of the house, who disdained

disdained even to know his physiognomy, though they were all of them glad to profit by his services. Some of the Republics had the good sense to bear with the humiliation attached to the idea of trade, in consideration of the opulence which was likewise inseparable from it.

The discovery of America gave rise in some measure to a different mode of thinking on this head. The productions of the New World having become the source of riches to the ancient continent; the prosperity of
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the Nations of Europe has gradually been found to be dependent on their Commerce; and if this of later years has risen in our esteem, it is because its services have been more sensibly felt. It would seem indeed to have ennobled itself, by having, in some measure, given rise to the last wars. It stimulated the efforts of the English, and has partaken of the splendor of their victories. It was impossible to see a Republic of Traders spreading terror amongst the Kings of the Earth, and lording it in the two Hemispheres, without admiring the spring which had
elevated

elevated them to such a height of power.

And yet it is so difficult to remove an ancient prejudice; or rather the wants to which the modern and unhappy military system has subjected the greater part of Europe, are so insatiable, that there is hardly a single country from the Black Sea to the shores of the Baltic; or from Cadiz to St. Peterburgh, in which Commerce is estimated or encouraged on the principles it ought to be. The whole of the consideration is directed, not to the
good

good of the people, but to the produce of the imposts.

The hunger of all Governments, without exception, is so violent, that they do not allow time enough for the establishment even of their factories and colonies; they aim at plucking the fruit, not from the branches, but from the roots, of the tree. Before the Merchant can be enabled to ascertain that his Speculations will be successful, the Finances have already taken from him a great part of his future profits. There is not an harbour in

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Europe,

Europe, in which Commerce, at its arrival, is not treated as an enemy: in many countries its peaceful bales are received by the bayonet: iniquitous outrage and scandalous extortions are the salutations it meets with on every frontier; and the moment a Merchant hears the *King's* name pronounced at the gate of a town, he may consider it as an invariable prelude to an affront or a robbery. Never, from the earliest existence of society, has excess been extended farther in this way, than it is in these times. I know no Administration which is not every moment repeating

repeating the folly related of the Miser by Esop, who emboweled his hen instead of waiting for the egg it was about to produce.

It is to no purpose that so many luminous writings have pointed out the truth on this head; or, that the general and particular interest should join themselves with reason to attack this cruel and absurd oeconomy; it would seem as if Governments became more sceptical, in proportion as the truth becomes more glaring.

Great Britain, notwithstanding all the motives which ought to excite her to give an example of reformation and liberty in this matter, is become a pattern only of obstinacy and slavery. She has neither suffered her prejudices to be removed by the injury this destructive tyranny is perpetually offering to herself; nor by the inefficacy of her laws against smuggling; or the fear lest a neighbouring kingdom, throwing off the chains of habit and prejudice, should open its ports, and, by giving a free reception to Commerce, become on a sudden, without efforts and without

out

out wars, the general mart, and consequently the first power of the world.

If France should ever adopt such a plan of policy; if her National Debt should one day be annihilated, either by one bold stroke of a rigid and masterly Minister; or, gradually, by a series of prudent and oeconomical manœuvres, and she should thus be enabled to offer an asylum to Commerce, in all her ports free from imposts, Great Britain will be irrecoverably lost. She will then have no other part to take than that of plunging herself into

the sea with which she is surrounded, to avoid the shame of a disaster, which she will owe only to her own obstinacy.

Notwithstanding these shackles, however, it must be confessed, that Commerce flourishes. The equality of servitude it experiences from one end of Europe to the other, is almost equivalent, at least with respect to us, to liberty. As nobody seems to have an idea of the success which would be the effect of independency, its present situation is considered as a prosperous one. If our warring Merchants have
pillaged

pillaged the Indies, they have enriched Europe. Industry, notwithstanding these obstacles, has made some happy efforts towards improvement. Different branches of manufacture have passed from one country to another, and every day serves for the establishment of new ones.

In these observations on the characteristics of the present century, it would be unpardonable to pass over in silence a species of traffic absolutely unknown till now, and which will probably not become frequent. I allude

to the treaty concluded between Great Britain and some of the German Princes for a supply of troops to act against the Americans. Posterity will not fail to consider this as one of the memorable events of the eighteenth century.

There are certainly no reproaches due to Great Britain on this subject. In want of Soldiers, and finding it more difficult to raise troops at home, than the means of supporting them, she readily purchases those who are ready to exchange their arms and their
blood

blood for money. This is by no means a new practice. It has been frequently adopted by the Trading Republics; as Tyre, Carthage, and Venice; nor were they blameable for such an expedient, at least on received principles. Very rarely did they derive from those mercenaries the advantages they expected. The minds which their money alone had procured to them, were incapable either of intrepidity in danger, or of fidelity in defeat. Still, however, if the manœuvre was imprudent on the side of politics,

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it could afford nothing criminal on that of morality.

In treaties of this sort each Soldier had his share of the arrangement which attached him to a new service. He disposed of himself freely and voluntarily, and in this manner incorporated himself, as it were, with the Nation he was come to defend. This gave him a kind of character which authorized him to kill, or to be killed, legitimately. The enemy to whom he was opposed had no reason to complain that slaves had been purchased to

to bring men to subjection. The freedom which presided at the contract enobled and legitimated what, without it, would have been odious and unjust.

We have even seen, and without scandal, people, who had no share in a dispute, take part in it as *Allies*, and in quality of *Auxiliaries*, shed either their own blood, or that of a Nation from whom they had received neither injury nor insult. But in these cases there was, at least, a species of fraternity which had influenced their conduct.

duct. They expected to have the same assistance in return whenever they required it. The Prince, who was at their head, did not speculate on their death, to enrich himself, after having bartered away their lives.

The Duke of Lorraine, in the last century; the Duke of Veymar, after the death of Gustavus Adolphus; and the warlike Bishop of Munster, in leading their troops wherever they were called by subsidies, had however some honest and honorable prettexts to cover this interested complaisance.

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In short, if the custom has prevailed amongst the Swiss, a nation so wise by the bye in other respects; so respectable, so mild, so averse to war on their own account, of devoting themselves to a life of warfare for other powers, and of examining, in these bloody discussions, only the subsidy with which they are tempted; yet they have the plea of very old and steady engagements to justify this seeming impropriety. Their regiments have been long included in the military establishment of the Governments they serve. It is not a sale made for the moment,
and

and to the profits of which the nation sacrifices a part of its subjects. Whereas in the present instance, the Germans transported to America are truly objects of traffick. Neither the Soldiers, nor their Masters, can have any interest either in the submission of the Colonies, or in the prosperity of Great Britain. There are no motives of friendly alliance to induce them to cross the seas. They are sent over by contract, and are as much a part of the cargo as the oxen that are transported with them. If they are carried over alive, and are not salted down to avoid

avoid the expences of nourishment, it is because their arms are more wanted than their flesh.

And what is still more inconceivable in this species of Commerce is, that their old masters seem to be more interested in their perishing, than the enemies they are sent to attack. The Americans gain by their death, only the diminution of the English army; but the German Princes, who receive a premium for each head of human cattle they send out of their dominions, have likewise stipulated an indemnity
for

for all that do not return: and this price of blood, this compensation for the lives of so many wretches, is intended neither for the widows nor the children of the deceased: it is paid into the hands of the Trader, and goes into the same coffers with the produce of the first sale.—The tyrants of *Angola* and *Juinda* live by a similar Commerce; but this usurious refinement is still unknown to them.

This iniquitous contract is not only repugnant to the laws of morality, and appears scandalous and criminal
when

when considered on the side of justice and humanity, but is even contrary to the principles of sound politics. All these Princes define *Liberty* to be the preservation of their privileges; and all of them acknowledge their leading interest to be in the continuance of the foedal anarchy to which they owe their power; and perhaps, it is good, for the repose of the rest of Europe, that this absurd and barbarous form of Government should not be too soon destroyed in the vast country which languishes under it: But they do not perceive, that if any particular ma-

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noeuvre can accelerate its abolition, it is the sale, of so many *White Negroes*, by which they depopulate their dominions.

It was after the drainage of Europe by the *Crusades*, that its Kings were enabled, with so much facility, to elevate themselves above their Peers. The Ducal Crowns, &c. having lost their support, in those extravagant and bloody expeditions, were no longer able to oppose the ascendancy of Royalty. The subjects, trampled on by the ruinous magnificence of so many
petty

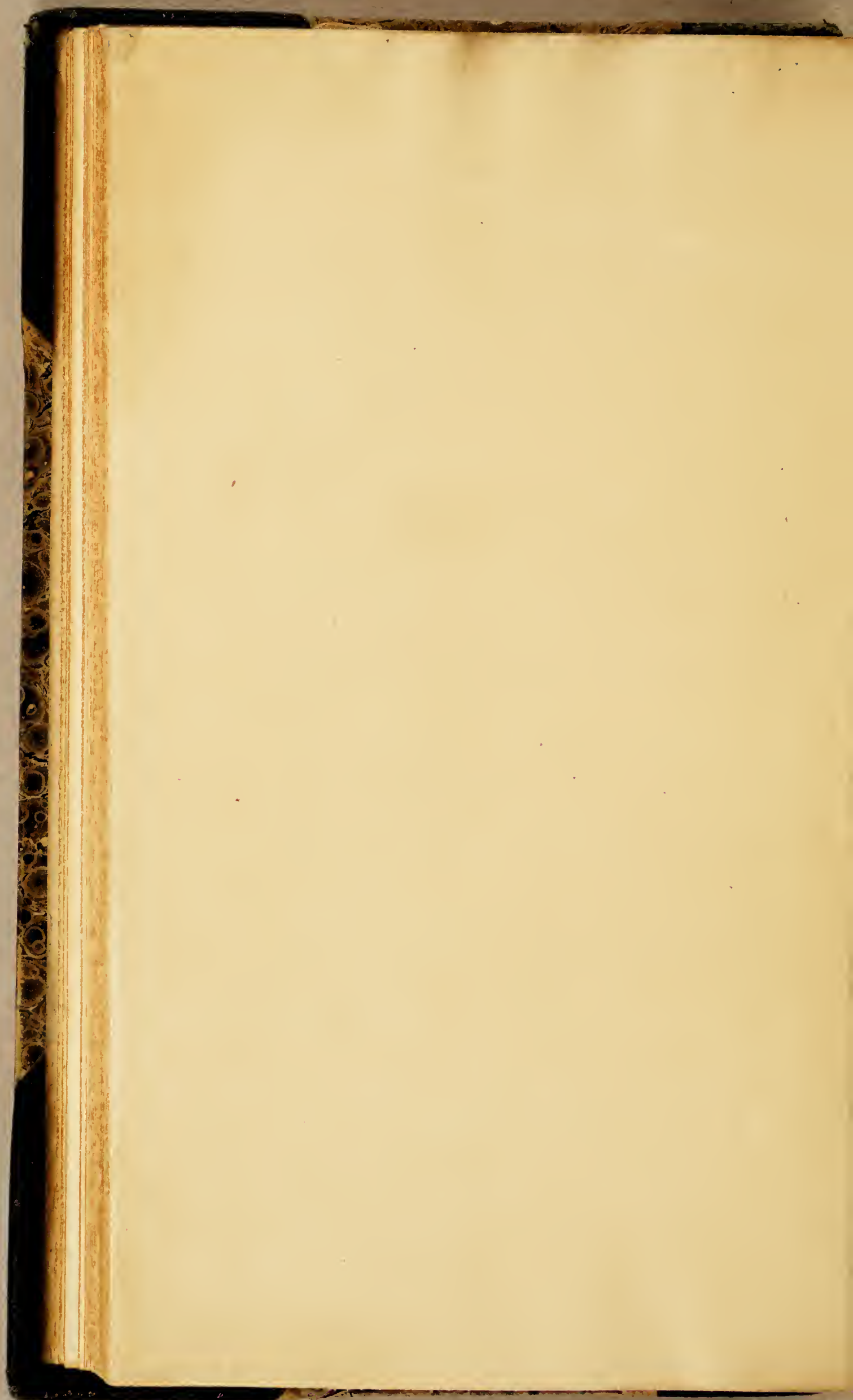
petty tyrants, were flattered with the hopes of finding security and repose under one. .

Who knows whether the same thing may not soon happen in Germany; and whether one or all of the Three Powers which made so easy a prey of Poland, may not be tempted to a partition of the Empire, the conquest of which will be the more easy in proportion as it is drained of its troops. The indignation which must be felt by subjects who see themselves bartered away to the highest bidder, would
surely

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surely lead them willingly to accept the protection of a powerful Prince. The Ghosts of their unfortunate brethren, wandering on the shores of America, will be no protection to the Tyrants who have sacrificed them to their avarice and ambition; and the Guineas with which the latter shall have increased their treasures, will be no security against an invasion in which ingenuity will be seconded by force, and the illegality of an usurpation obviated by the general assent of the people.

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